

A
DISCOURSE
OF
PLURALITIES;

(With the
APPENDANT NON-RESIDENCE)

Evincing the Great

EVIL in TAKING,

And Necessary

DUTY of FORSAKING

Them : By him that would approve himself a faithful

Minister of God.

Take heed unto your selves, and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, Act. 20. 28. For the love of Money is the Root of all Evil, but thou, O man of God, flee these things, 1 Tim. 6. 10, 11.

L O N D O N,

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T O T H E

R E A D E R.

Curteous Reader,

T*Here was lately Published a little Piece, Intituled, An Endeavour for Peace among Protestants. The aim whereof was upon Christian, Charitable, and Safe Condescensions on the Churches part, (as the Author thought) to reconcile unto her Communion those who most unhappily had been so long Dissenters from it. What the success thereof will prove, 'tis only time can afford a Judgment. But the mean while, 'tis very evident, That Pluralities (the Possessors and Abettors whereof are both so numerous and so powerful) must be Back-friends to the Design, which is built on Self-denial; besides the many other Injuries, that they are guilty of towards God, our State and Church therein; as will be seen hereafter. If therefore this Discourse (which owneth its Original meerly to those Thoughts) shall, by the Almighty's blessing, prosper any thing towards*

To the Reader.

the Cure of such an Evil, the Author will receive an Ample Reward. However; his Work is with the Lord, and Labour shall not be in vain in him. But his Prayer must be, That Gospel Ministers may ever serve the Lord Jesus, and not their own Belly: not seeking their own, but the things which are Jesus Christs: and that these Papers may be serviceable to the purpose, whereto all good men, whether others hear or do forbear, will readily say, Amen.

AGAINST

I

A G A I N S T P L U R A L I T I E S.



§. 1.
Introduction.

Although I nothing doubt, but that some *good* and *honest* minds, (what with the Laws connivance at it, others example in it, and their own defect of serious thoughts about it) have been unhappily snared in the foulest guilt of holding *More-Cures-than-one*, the very *distance* whereof bars all possibility of their discharging duly the Duties that belong unto them; yet there is cause to fear, that in the Crowd of such Delinquents, there may be others found, who are plainly of their number, on whom the blessed *Paul* imprints that blackest Character of *Supposing Gain Godliness*. And certain 'tis, that this *Unchristian Practice* gives but too much occasion to the People, for crying out of *All* therein engag'd, in *St. Peters* words, That through *Covetousness* they do make *Merchandise* of them. For who can see a Person settled in a Benefice, which doth not only comfortably support him, and his Family, but hath to spare, (the common Case, and here reflected on) yet grasping on another, that he can't attend one, but will be apt to conclude; 'Tis not the work of *Christ*, but *Mammon* of *Unrighteousness*, whereto he is a *Potary*. And, how many such sad *Spectacles* may a little Traveller in this Kingdom meet with? and yet, the wonder is not great, if now, as heretofore; and in this Church as well as in the *Primitive*, men shall be found, and in the *Sacred Office*, who

Against Pluralities.

who serve not our Lord Jesus, but their own Bellies. The fairest Crop of *Wheat* may have some Tares therein. *Honey* it self is not without its filth and scum: nor is the richest *Ore* quite free from Dross. It ought not therefore to cast a worse reflection on the *English Clergy*, that some bad men creep in among them; than 'twas disgraceful to the *Blessed Apostles*, that *Judas* was of their Society. 'Tis pity any should be so like him, as to pretend *Christs* service, when they only mean *their own*, by carrying of his Bag. And those concerned ought to bestow sad thoughts upon it; that though that wretch made shift a while; severest Vengeance was not long in overtaking of him: yea, 'tis observable, that his *Hypocrisie* was no sooner manifested, than Notoriously stigmatized also, *John* 12. 6. A fair direction for guiding us upon the like occasion! who may not therefore spare their open great miscarriage; that, seeming to be *Christs Disciples*, do tread so plainly in his Steps, that did betray him. I will not say to the *Non-resident Pluralist*, as *Nathan* did to *David*, *Thou art the man*; yet, cannot but with grief observe, they are too like, in this respect; Both seek *their own*, and not the things which are *Jesus Christs*.

§. 2.
case stated.

For 'tis notorious, that we have great numbers of those Ministers in this distressed Church, whom a *Single Cure of Souls*, (sufficient to make a serious man cry out with *Paul*, *Who is sufficient for it?*) although endowed, not only with a *Competent*, but abundant *Maintenance*, cannot content; but they must seize upon another, the remote distance whereof, besides the most important and tremendous work belonging thereunto, makes it impossible, that both should be attended by them. A course, so evil in it self, and of so bad, and fatal Influence, both on our Church
in

Against Pluralities.

3

in general, the particular Congregations that are concerned, and those Ministers own Immortal Souls, that words are wanting, fully to express the vileness of it. Surely 'tis no rash Sentence in him that saith; *Pluralities are the Pest of the Church, and Bane of our Religion.* Which, I shall hope, will not be disappointed of all *good mens* Suffrages, even *those* that hitherto may by surprise have been entangled in this snare, when once they hear what *Cogent Arguments* lye against it, and what *Clear Answers* unto all Pleas for it. Of both these in their order; and as briefly, as the Case will bear.

The Arguments are these that follow; 1. *They war against Scripture*; 2. *Antiquity is a Stranger to them*; 3. *They are doom'd by Councils*; 4. *Are against Justice*; 5. *And Charity*; 6. *And Honour*; 7. *And Prudence*; 8. *Serving only to Vice, and naughtiness.*

§. 3.
Arguments
against Pluralities.

1. *Pluralities make open War against the Scriptures*; I mean not only, because there is not in them any Title of Precept, or Example, to encourage them: but they are plainly condemned there. Should any ask for a Particular Law in Terms unto this purpose; it might not happily be absurd to answer, that, as *Romulus* made not any such against *Parricide*, because he judg'd so great a Villany was not incident unto human nature; so probably the *Sacred Pen-men* might in this case forbear, as being loath to think that such a Monster should e're be hatch'd in the Church of Christ. And give me leave to note it, that, as *Rome* could not afford an instance of that Unnatural Barbarism until about six hundred years were past from the building of that City: So *Christianity* was not pester'd with this grievous Plague, till full as many years, or more, had been elap'd from the

1. Argument
against Scripture.

Ap. Plutarch.
Romul.

Against Pluralities.

Manifested
two ways.

the first Birth and Infancy of the same. But this is not intended as a shift; for that is utterly needless; as he must see, who will observe how plainly, *Holy Writ* doth; 1. *Condemn Ambition, Covetousness, and Sloth, as bad in all, but stark naught in Ministers*; which they should flee from, as from Hell it self; from whence they come, and whereunto they go: And 2ly. *Command Personal Attendance on their several Flocks*, from those that have them; without any Dispensation, ordinarily, in the Case.

First, Scr.
condemns Ambition, Covetousness, and Sloth in Ministers.

Touching the Former; that *Ambition, Covetousness and Sloth* are so condemned in the Minister; should any ask me, *what is this unto our purpose*? He may as well demand, Why Sin is blam'd for all our Miseries? 'Tis not more manifest, that all our *Woe* doth spring from *Sin*; than that *Pluralities* do owe their being to those wicked Parents, *Covetousness, Ambition, and Sloth*; For when there is before *Enough, and Spare*: (as was supposed) it is impossible to assign any other real cause of grasping after more, but to maintain their *Laziness, Pride, and Covetousness*.

And when the *Disciples* of our Saviour had a spice of one of those *Diseases*; doth he not presently apply himself unto the Cure, and clap a *Corrosive* to the Proud Flesh, which was growing up? He tells them, 'twas a *Heathenish Plant*, and should not grow in *Christian Soil*; by no means, in the *Holy Sanctuary*: *It shall not be so among you*, Matth. 20. 25. 26. Doth not he that lodged in his Masters bosom, set a black brand upon *Diotrephes*, for his aspiring humor? 3 John 9. 10. How doth the great Apostle of *Us Gentiles*, charge his dear *Timothy*, to beware of *loving Money, the Root of all Evil*; when he saith, *Thou, O man of God, flee these things*, 1 Tim. 6. 10. 11.

And

And he of the Circumcision, banish all filthy lucre from the Ministers Eyes, in taking up a *Single Charge*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 2. What *Death*, do we think, would he have doom'd it to; had he perceived it gotten into the heart of any, to make him grasp for more than one? yea, and to shew us, how *naturally*, cursed *Sloth*, and *Negligence* attend the other *Two*; long before them all, the *Prophet* calls such Ministers, *Dumb Dogs that cannot (at least will not) bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber; yea, greedy Dogs, which can never have enough; Shepherds that cannot understand, looking all to their own way, everyone for his gain from his Quarter*, *Esaï.* 56. 11. But why should I light a Candle to the Sun, or spend more words in a Case so plain? To quote all places in the Scripture against these *Vices*, particularly this *Idolatry*, (*Col.* 3. 5.) and in *Ministers* especially; would be to transcribe good part of the Holy Bible.

As for the *Latter*, That *Personal attendance on their Flock* is indispensibly required of Ministers, *Ordinarily*; the Scriptures are as full unto this likewise. There may sometimes, and for a while perhaps, be *just occasion* of the Ministers absence; on which necessity, he may pass guiltless both with God and Men. But to do this *Ordinarily*, or for a *Con- stancy*, and meerly *out of Choice*, as well as plainly for some *Secular Interest*; This will not be dispensed with in the *Court of Heaven*, whatever *Dispensations* may be gotten here on Earth. The Apostle doth command the *Ephesian Elders*, *Acts.* 20. 28. *to take heed unto themselves and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost had made them Overseers, and to feed the Church.* That the *Elders* here, were *Ministers*, is out of question: and that they were meerly *Presbyters*, and not *Bishops*, *St. Jerom* confidently affirm-
Secondly, re-
quires Per-
sonal Attendance
on their Flocks.
Act. 20. 28.
Comment in
Tit. 1.

Numb. 18. In-
fra.

Vid. 20.

How many
Pluralists are
there in Eng-
land that hard-
ly see either of
their Livings
in a year? Sir
S. Degge a stren-
uous Contra-
Pluralist, Parf.
Couns. Part. 1.

etq. 4.

1 Thef. 5. 12.

13.

eth: to be sure, they are charg'd in their *own Persons* to attend the *Flock*; as plainly, as words can speak it. And note it, the self same way that they are call'd upon to tend their *own Souls*; they are required to attend the *Flock*: for ther's but one *taking heed*, which serves for *Both*. And surely that was not to be *By Another*, and without *Themselves*. But the *wretched Shift of doing this by Another*, was not then born; and shall be hereafter handled by us, according to its merit: mean while, I would fain know, how *Pluralists* can with any reason be supposed to be made *Overseers by the Holy Ghost* of that *Flock*; which, after they have seized on, they hardly ever see; or to no other purpose, but to *Fleece*, not *Feed* them: *St. Paul*, while he staid there at *Ephesus* in his own Person, both taught them publicly, and from house to house, vid. 20. And proposed that Practice for the Presbyters imitation. And do not our *Non-residents* keep very close unto this Copy? They have their seasons, I confess, to go from house to house, and not omit the *poorest*: but 'tis to call for, and exact their *Dues*; For other Doctrines, they are so far from doing any thing like to the keeping *Conventicles*; that the *Temple* shall not see them in a *Twelve months time together*; or more, perhaps. Can we imagine that this same Apostle, when in another place, 1 Thef. 5. 12. 13.) he doth beseech the *People*, to know them that Laboured among them, and were over them in the Lord, and did admonish them; and to esteem highly of them for their works sake; can we, I say, imagine, that he should ever mean *Pluralists* and *Non-residents*; that are so far from *Admonishing*, *Labouring*, and *Working* with them, that they are not among them? Nay, is it not most evident hence, that all who take the Care of Souls upon

Against Pluralities.

7

upon them, should both be Present; yea, and Painful likewise, with their People? Doth not the Apostle Peter therefore to this purpose, charge the Elders to feed the Flock of God, that is among them; that is, whereof they have the Care: and to be examples to them, (1 Pet. 5. 2, 3.) And are not they marvellously likely to do thus for them, and be thus to them, that are at twenty, forty, or a hundred miles distance from them; Ministers should be indeed the *Light of the World*: but be they snuff'd ne're so well, and shine they never so bright, those that are so far from them, may walk in darkness notwithstanding. Were it indeed believed by Non-residents, that they must give an account to God for the Souls they undertook the charge of: (and they acknowledge to the Bishop, when they are admitted, that they accept so great a Care) they would surely watch, and know that they could not do so unto any purpose, except they kept upon the Spot, where the danger is. That they must answer thus, and therefore ought to watch so, as we speak, is clear by *Hebr. 13. 17. They watch for your Souls, as they that must give account.* And then, what man may safely dare to take another, and a distant Cure; where he can never do the *Watchmans* part? For, being absent, he can give no warning; for want of warning, the Sinner dieth in his Iniquity; and the blood of him so dying, will God require at this false *Watchmans* hand, *Ezek. 3. 18.* If Personal Attendance were no Duty, why should our Saviour brand that Shepherd for an Hireling, that fleeth when the Wolf is coming, *John 10. 12.* And, what's the difference twixt fleeing from, and not coming at the Flock? Both equally expose it unto danger; yea, may not they be strictly said to flee, and leave the Sheep; who, after their Induction, come not at them,

το ἐν ὑμῶν
ποιμνίῳ: gre-
gem, qui a vo-
bis pendet; uti
apud Sopho-
clem, ἐν οἷς
ἴσμεν, abs te
pendemus, Bez.
in loc.
1 Pet. 5. 2, 3.

Hebr. 13. 17.

Ezek. 3. 18.

John 10. 12.

Against Pluralities.

John 21.

save to fleece them? Was not *Peter* bound, if he lov'd his Lord, to feed his *Lambs* and *Sheep* in Person, *John* 21. nothing more manifest. But to produce more *Scripture-Testimonies*, would be the pouring water into the Ocean; I shall therefore beg *Non-Resident Pluralists* to observe with sadness, what a dreadful *Wo* God hath denounced against those *Shepherds* that feed

Ezek. 34. 2. &c.

themselves, and not the *Flock*, in *Ezek.* 34. 2, 3, 4, to vers. 11. Son of Man, Prophecie against the *Shepherds* of *Israel*, Prophecie and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the *Shepherds*, Wo be to the *Shepherds* of *Israel* that do feed themselves: should not the *Shepherds* feed the *Flock*? Ye eat the fat, and ye cloth you with the *Wool*, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the *Flock*. The Diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no *Shepherd*: and they became meat to all the *Beasts* of the *Field*, when they were scattered. My *Sheep* wandred through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my *Flock* was scattered upon all the face of the *Earth*, and none did search or seek after them. Therefore, ye *Shepherds*, hear the Word of the Lord; As I live, saith the Lord God, surely, because my *Flock* became a prey, and my *Flock* became meat to every *Beast* of the *Field*, because there was no *Shepherd*, neither did my *Shepherds* search for my *Flock*, but the *Shepherds* fed themselves, and fed not my *Flock*: Therefore, O ye *Shepherds*, hear the Word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against the *Shepherds*, and I will require my *Flock* at their hand, and cause them

them to cease from feeding the Flock, neither shall the Shepherds feed themselves any more; for, I will deliver my Flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. And surely, if Non-resident Pluralists are not quite past feeling; they must be sensible, that they are the men concerned therein. Personal neglects are there complain'd of: and that's their guilt; and unavoidably so. And Personal Vengeance is there threatned, on all such Delinquents: from which, by timely Repentance, may the Good Lord deliver them.

So much for the first Argument, *Pluralities war against the Scriptures*: wherein we have spent more words, because it is of greatest consequence; the rest will be dispatched sooner.

2. *Antiquity is an utter Stranger hereunto*: I may safely say, a bitter Enemy to the Roots, and Seeds hereof; Sloth, Pride, and Covetousness, in the Ministers of the Gospel: Rebukes, both frequent, and severe, against these Vices (as well as others) may be met with in the *Ancient Fathers*. But not one Title about that, we now are dealing with. The truth is, This Piece of Naughtiness was only in the womb; not midwif'd into the world as yet. Twill not serve the turn to tell us; That the Church was under Persecution in those *Elder days*; and then there was not such Provision made for Ministers, as hath been since: For, though some part hereof be true; the whole is not. I hope at *Constantine's* time, there was no cause to complain in either of those respects: Both Cruel Persecution then was gone, and Great Prosperity did succeed it: but how much to the Churches benefit, let the Reader judge by *St. Jerome's* words. He tells us, That the Church of Christ did thrive by Persecutions, was crown'd with Martyrs: but when

§. 4.
2d. Argument
against Anti-
quity.

Part 3. E-
pist. 43. de vita
Capt. Non.

Christian

Against Pluralities.

Christian Princes were in power, Her riches did indeed increase, but vertues decrease. And this was that which gave occasion to the well-known Proverb; Piety was brought-a-bed with Plenty, and the Daughter choak'd her Mother. But notwithstanding such degeneracy then, we have no notice, that this foul Corruption of Church-mens Spiritual Bigamy did any where prevail in the Church, for the first Six hundred years. No instance can be found (upon my best enquiry) of any Ministers taking two Wives at once: or rather a Concubine to his Wife, to vex her; I mean a Second Church; unto his former. A learned and excellent Author, saith this boldly; Never any thought to hold the Title of an Office, or enjoy the Profit without doing Service; but only after the year seven hundred in the Western Church. And as before a Person was chosen fit for the necessity of the Church; so afterwards, a Degree, Dignity, or Emolument was fitted to the Quality of the Person: from whence arose the exercising of the Ministry by a Substitute. Behold by this, the Venerable Hoary Hairs of Curates, and their Masters, Pluralists!! with whom the Christian Church was utterly unacquainted, till Popery had invaded it; and the Universal Bishop gotten to be Tyrant over it. It should seem indeed, that some such Creatures were creeping into the Church before, about four hundred and fifty years after Christ; but they were quickly disorder'd, and as soon repuls'd by the Council of Chalcedon, consisting of six hundred and thirty Bishops: as we shall hear anon. And the Attempt was reinforced near two hundred years after this Council: but Gregory the Great, then Bishop of Rome, and just before the Man of Sin was mounted on his Throne, crush'd it in the Shell: as may be seen by his Letter extant in the Decrees: wherein he Orders,

*Hist. of Couns.
of Trent. lib. 2.
ad fin. Anno
Dom. 1546.
Engl. Edit.
page 217.*

*Infr. Argu-
ment 3.*

*Dist. 89. C. 1.
Singula.*

Against Pluralities.

I-I

Orders, *That the several Duties belonging to the Church should be committed unto several men; and that no one Person, how well soever experienced, should at one time hold a double Service.* Thus long you see the *Ancient Church* was not acquainted with our *Pluralists*; or laid their Ax unto the very Root thereof, when once they found it. 'Tis true, that some time after (as also hath before been noted) this *Mischief*, with a Crowd of others, came in, as a *Rein*er unto *Antichrist*.

3. *This Practice hath been doom'd too by several Councils; and many Canons of the Church have pass'd against it.* Methinks, it doth betray its guilt, by the very face thereof. Are not these *Craftsmen* glad to get their *Licences*, and *Dispensations* to set up with? Were there no *Transgression*, Plain men would ask, *What need of Dispensation?* The *Canons* of our Church, 'tis thought, are not severe enough against it; and yet they have not the fairest aspect on it neither. Witness the *Many Restrictions*, necessity of *Residence*, and *sufficiency of the Curate*, that is injoynd. Howe're, *St. Augustins Plea* doth her good service too. 'Tis one thing (saith he) what the Church doth tolerate; and another, what She teacheth. 'Tis only that, not this, may be imputed unto Her. And yet it must be said, (however it may reflect upon us) that other Churches, both long before any Reformation had been made; and since it too; and which bear a Mortal hatred thereunto, have made most smart *Decrees* against it. For the *Reformed Churches* abroad, I need not be concerned to produce their *Censures* of it; till it be made appear, which of them have e're been troubled with it. Well then, the first *Cannon* planted against *Pluralists*, that I shall mention; is that of the *Laterane Council* under *Alexander* the third, and about

§. 5.
3d. Argument
against Church
Canons.

*Vid Can 41.

*Aliud est quod
docemus, aliud
quod sustinemus
&c. Contr.
Faust. l. 20. c.
prope fin.*

Tom. Contil. 3.
Can. 13.

the year 1180. The words are these; *Because some men, putting no bounds unto their Covetousness, endeavour to get Ecclesiastical Dignities, and more than one Parish Church, contrary to the Order of the Holy Canons: so as when they are hardly fit to discharge one mans Duty, they receive the Wages of several: We strictly command, that it be never so done any more hereafter. When therefore a Church is to be disposed of, let such a Person be found out, as will Reside there, and discharge the Cure himself: Otherwise the Receiver shall lose what he hath taken, and the Giver his power of disposing. So that Excellent Canon; and from a Popish Council! And, To the Extirpation of Pluralities, and Non-residences; without adding one word of Explication!*

An. Do. 781.
Prid. Conc. Synops.
Tom. 3.
Conc. Post. Aff.
7. Can. 15.

But near four hundred years before this time, another General, and the second Nicene Council, (as 'tis called) is found to have this Grain of Wheat, in a whole Heap of Tares: Let not a Clergy man be henceforth settled in two Churches: for, this belongs to Merchandise and filthy Lucre, and is alien from the Churches custom: Every one therefore ought to abide where he is called, and to settle in one Church: So full and plain, as to need no Comment! Nay, and three hundred years afore this last mention'd Council, that undoubted General one of Chalcedon (glanc'd on in the former Argument) nipt this mischief in the Bud, and would not let it blossom; much less bear Ripe Fruit. For thus it saith, 'Tis not lawful for a Clerk to be Intituled to (or inrolled in) two Churches: viz. That wherein he was Ordain'd at first, and the greater whereunto, for Vain-glories sake, he goeth afterwards: but let such men be brought back to their first; and only there attend their Duty. Which needs must bar all hopes of having Churches point

An. Do. 454.
Prid. ubi supr.
Tom. Concil. 2.
Aff. 15. Can.
10.

more than one; or not discharging Duty by ones self, where it was undertaken. But to conclude this point of General Councils, the late Trent Assembly, styled by the Romanists, the last General Council; whatever the Deeds among them are, in Words condemn this Practice. For, reciting that Speech of the Council of Chalcedon, (but just now mention'd) *Neminem oportere in duabus Ecclesiis conscribi*, they exclaim against their wicked Covetousness, who are grasping after many Benefices: and charge the whole Clergy, even Cardinals themselves, To keep no more than one Cure of Souls: as may be seen at large in the place refer'd in the Margent. Nay, there were among them then and there; and the major part of a General Congregation too; that did maintain, Both that Residency was required by the Law of God, and Pluralities by the same forbidden.

Decret. de Res.
form. C. 17.
Sejs. 24.

Hist. Coun. of
Trent, l. 2. p.
253. ad An.
1547. Circ. med.
§. 1. 6. Anno
1562. Engl. E-
dit. pag. 496.

Now adding hereunto, Pope* John 22th. his Decree, That none (save Cardinals and Kings Sons) shall keep more than one Cure of Souls, and one Dignity without Cure; upon pain of losing both, in case of disobedience: together with Pope † Innocent the 3d. his peremptory Determination, That whosoever accepts a Benefice with Cure, (having before another of that nature) shall be forthwith depriv'd thereof; and if he make a stir to keep it, shall forfeit both: now putting these Decrees of Popes, and Popish Councils all together, as I said; 'tis worthy to be seriously thought on; whether it doth not cast an ill Reflection on a Protestant Church, to connive at that, which very Papists do condemn? especially, since both their Latter, as well as Elder Doctors, are therein Unanimous, as a Learned Author of theirs, and in an Excellent Piece against Pluralities, hath evinced fully. But we must make haste.

* Extrav.
Com. lib. 3. Tit.
2. De Prab. &
Dign. Cap. 5.
Execrabilis.
† Greg. De-
cret. lib. 3. Tit.
5. De Prab. &
Dign. C. 28.
De multa.

De Cleric.
Sanctim, Cap.
11. Sect. 4. Arg.
5. 6.

§. 6.
4. Argument
against Equity
and Justice.

4. 'Tis most apparently likewise against all Equity and Justice, That, *Beneficium datur propter Officium*, the Benefice is bestowed for the Service that belongs unto it, Who is able to make a doubt of? Doth not every new Incumbent yield himself (*accipere curam*) to undertake the Cure; the Work and Duty that is; when he receives his Title from the Bishops hands? Doth not the Apostle make it plain, That the Ministers Reaping Carnal things is founded meerly upon Sowing Spiritual; as *Ministring about holy things onely*, could onely entitle to the right of Living on the things of the Temple; and waiting at the Altar, for partaking with it? yes, he doth so: and he concludeth it Gods Ordinance now; That they who preach the Gospel, should live upon it, 1 Cor. 9. 11, 13, 14. So that Maintenance is only due for Service: which was our Saviours mind too, when he said, That Meat belong'd to Workmen, Matth. 10. 10. and Hire to Labourers, Luk. 10. 7. And, who can be ignorant, or not ready to acknowledge it, that our Kings and other Benefactors, settled Glebes, and Tythes with us (which Law confirmeth) for the particular Service of those Places, whence they rise, and whereunto they are assigned? Those Donations were upon such Conditions; namely, That the People should be there Attended, where the Ministers were so Rewarded. And we know who said, If it be but a mans Covenant, (or Testament) no man disanulleth, or addeth thereunto, Gal. 3. 15. So that Justice and Equity, as well as the Express Law of God conclude, That he that Teacheth, is to be communicated to by him that is Taught, and not another, that doth not teach them, Gal. 6. 6. Nay, as he that doth not work, must not eat at all, 2 Theff. 3. 10. So, he may not have a double Mess, that doth but single Work, if that.

What

Against Pluralities.

15

What an *Unequal*, and an *Unrighteous* thing is it then, that *one man* should take all the *Pains*, and *another* the *Profit* thereunto belonging? That *Labourers* should go without, and *Loyterers* bear away the *Hire*, and *Reward* from them? Why should *Lazy Pluralists* expect the *Pay*, belonging unto *Labourious Souldiers*; or demand the *Wages* due to *painful Workmen*? Diligent Preachers are the *One*, and *Other*, in the Gospel: but *they* are neither; in *one of their Cures* at least. Can it be justified, that when I sweat at Plow all day; *another*, that did not so much as look on, shall carry away my *Wages* at night? Or, when I venture my Life in the Field, *he* that never struck one Stroke, should come at Muster day, and take away my *Pay*? This is the Case betwixt the *Painful Curate*, and the *Lazy Pluralist*: And, *what words are bad enough for the Iniquity of such Deeds*? Why may they not as well go into *Peoples Houses*, and take away what Plate, or other things they have a mind unto; or stand upon the Road, and put the *Moneys* of those men they meet with, into their own Pockets? Oh! There's a *Jayl* and *Gibbet* in these Cases! But the *Curse of God*, and *Hell hereafter*, are they nothing in the other? Well, that we may proceed.

§. 7.
5th. Argument against
Charity.

5. *Yea, and against Charity too*; I mean not only, what is due to the *Souls* of *Christians*, and their own also: which *too many Pluralists*, God knoweth, seem not to have a Stock of, that may so much as match the *gleaning after Vintage*. For, beside the failing in his *Personal Duty*, which God requireth; how commonly do we see *Ignorant*, or *Vitious Curates* (whether will serve cheapest) give him good content; if *some men* do not seek for such: when the

Profits of the Place would well encourage, it may be *Two*, Learned, Pious, and painful Preachers; as the necessity of a numerous Congregation probably may require the same. 'Tis certain, would they resign their Super-numerary Living to a *Worthy Successor*, there would be proof of *Christian Love* unto their *Peoples Souls*; and they should thereby deliver *their own* from heavy Guilt.

But there is *another kind of Charity* also, which this Practice is at enmity with. The Pluralists know, vast numbers of *Worthy Scholars*, that are Ministers; (in and out of the Universities) and some with the charge of Wife and Children on their hands; hardly find means to get them Bread: but *they* have several Hundreds; perhaps a Thousand Pounds, or more, *per annum*, by their *Cures*, and *Dignities* the while: so that, though their *Pains* be that of *Drones*, yet they both eat the Fat, and drink the Sweet; live in their Palaces, are Cloth'd in Silks, and keep their Coaches, with ample Retinues; and like *them* in *Amos*, 6. 4, 5, 6. are never grieved for the *Affliction* of their Brother *Joseph*, though brought upon him, by their *Uncharitable*, and *Ungodly Covetousness*: besides the *manifest Injustice*, as we have heard; Is there not the *shutting up of bowels of Compassion*, here? And consequently, just cause, *with fear*, to ask; *How dwelleth the Love of God* in such? 1 *John* 3. 17. Their works proclaim, that it is the love of *Money*, (which is the Root of all Evil, 1 *Tim.* 6. 10.) and of *this World*, (with which the Love of the Father cannot consist, 1 *John* 2. 15.) whereto they pay their Homage and stand Devoted. But let them remember; *The Labourers Hire crieth, and the Cry doth enter into the Ears of the Lord of Sabaoth*:

Sabaoth: and *themselves* are Deaf, if they do not hear it.

6. *Against Honour also*; How unworthy is it, for any man to accept, much more to *Court*, and *sue* for, such an Office, which he knows himself uncapable to discharge; and truly, never doth intend it? To be a *Labourer* in Christs Vineyard; and yet to *Loyter* out, one half of his work, at least? To cry up, and magnifie *Primitive Purer times*; and live a perfect Non-conformist thereunto; To avow separation from an *Apostate Church*, and yet to keep so foul an instance of her Apostacy; which her self, for very shame, *by Words*, is forced to condemn? To make a shew of Love to *Justice* and *Charity*, and indeed regard neither; but hate both? Is not this to play the *Current*; nay, the *Errant Hypocrite*? See then, *how well* our Pluralists do come off! *How honourably* they acquit themselves! In a word: If it be *Noble*, to be *false* and *negligent* in the *greatest Trust* on Earth; to be *Unjust*, and *Cruel* to our dearest *Brethren*; to count *Gain* *Godliness*, and prefer *Earth* before *Heaven*: then, these *Delinquents* may pass for *men of Reputation*: else, their own hands will lay *their Honour in the dust*. This is so legible, that he that runs may read it.

§. 8.
6th. Argument Against Honour.

7. *Against Prudence, beside*: As for *Spiritual Wisdom*: that surely is utterly banished hence. Were it possible else, that *mens own*, and *Peoples Souls* should be postpon'd unto, and scorn'd in comparison of the *Mammon of Unrighteousness*? Nay, *Common Prudence* is abandon'd by these men! For, what can be more undiscreeet; than, when there is *no need at all* (as was at first supposed) to create themselves the ill
Opinion

§. 9.
7th. Argument against Prudence.

It was the saying of a merry fellow, That in Christendom there were neither Scholars enough, Gentlemen enough, nor Jews enough. And when answer was made him, there was rather too great

a plenty than any scarcity: he replied, if there were Scholars enough, so many would not be double or treble Beneficed: if Gentlemen enough, so many Peasants would not be ranked among the Gentry: if Jews enough, so many Christians would not profess Usury. So Doctor Heylen prints the Scorn made of them, Cosmogr. Com. W. Genoa, at the beginning.

Opinion of, and become indeed *just Scorn* unto, the generality of *Understanding, Sober, and Impartial* Christians? Is't not almost a Proverb, Their only way to climb to Heaven, is by heaping Steeple upon Steeple, as the Gyants did one Mountain on another for that purpose? Certainly, *themselves* cannot be ignorant, that the *Gentry* censure them, the *People* hate them, and their own *Best Brethren* grieve, and blush for them. Nor do they think it *Wisdom* in the *man* that said;

—————*Populus me sibilat: at mihi plaudo
Ipse domi; simulac nummos contemplor in arcâ.*

In short: They every where pass for *Perfect Drones*, who feed, and fatten on the sweat of others brows. And *most men* in their hearts, *Ignavum fucos pecus a præsepibus arcent*: wishing the Magistrate would speedily put *his hands* thereto.

§. 10.
8th. Argument, serveth only to mens Corruptions.

8. Lastly, The *Pluralities* spoken of are only *serviceable unto Covetousness, Ambition, Pride, Luxury, Sloth, and Universal Unconscionableness in the whole Christian, and Ministerial Calling.* For Proof; do but consider duly what hath been already spoken, and consult your senses therewithal, and more there is not need of. He that can shew the *man* that is not bated, but increased in his *Diligence, Sobriety, Humility, Modesty, Liberality, and Universal Conscience in Religion by Pluralities, Erit mihi magnus Apollo*; shall be esteemed one, that hath made an Observation, which the *whole World* hath hitherto been a perfect Stranger to.

So

Against Pluralities.

19

So many *Evident Proofs* being therefore made against Pluralities, the Bill must needs be found, a Verdict given, and Sentence past thereon, for Condemnation of them.

But what *Criminal* is there, but will say something for himself: or what *Cause* so bad, but that *one Plea* and answer d.

§. II.

Plea urg'd.
and answer d.

We shall therefore fairly hear what the *Delinquent*, with whom we have to do, can plead in the *defence*; or at the least, *excuse* of the Guilt imputed to him.

1st. Plea.

1. *Learned and Good Ministers have been found to do so; and it hath been used for many ages in the Church.*

Answer.

Admit, That *Learned*, and *Good Men* too, have done it, (*for who am I to judge mens States with God, nor dare I but to maintain such thoughts of some;*) neither *Sound Learning*, and much less *True Godliness*, could prompt them to it; as by what above appear-eth. All *Stories*, and the *most Sacred* too, afford too many Instances of *some Good Mens great Miscarriages*. And the *very Best* do yet know but in part: and can therefore do no better. However, *we are to follow a very Paul, but as he doth Christ*. As for the *length of time*, wherein it hath been used: we heard before, how *Old* it was; younger by a great many hundred years, than *Christianity*; and *born with Antichrist*. But could it write a *great deal Elder*: what were it worth, whilst we can truly say, *From the beginning it was not so*. This Plea is therefore Silenc'd by *St. Cyprian: Custom without Truth, is but the Antiquity of an Errour*.

Consuetudo
sine veritate est
vetustas erroris

Ep. ad Pomp.
prop. fin.

2d. Plea.

Answer.

2. *The Law allows (with Qualification) to take another Church.*

What *Ecclesiastical Laws* require you in the Case, hath been heard already: and in a perfect Contradiction to this Plea. And a man would think, that

Good

Against Pluralities.

Good Church-Laws should have no little value with *Good Church-men*. Doubtless if the *Church* forbid, though the *State* allow; such men, as those, soon know, not only that *forbearance* is the safer *Choice*, but manifest Duty to them. However, no Humane Laws (whatever *Rome* shall say) can dispense with the Law of God: and *that*, we have already found most peremptory in the Negative. Touching the *Common*, or the *Statute Laws* with us, I must confess great ignorance in them: but yet that worthy Knight, and Lawyer too, Sir *Simon Degge* will tell you, That the *Commons* of England always complained against *Pluralities* and *Non-residence*: and many *Parliaments* under several *Popish Kings* mov'd for several *Penalties* against them. And whatsoever allowance in that Case is made by Law, was done in times of *Popery*: which gives no cause to *Protestants* to be fond thereof. This I am sure of, Those that will think *all good*, that Humane Laws (whensoever made) allow of; must quickly think *many things bad*, which Divine Laws enjoin us. And then let them pass for never so *Loyal Subjects* to their *Temporal Prince*, they must prove *Rebels to the King of Kings*,

Parf. Counf.
P. 1. C. 7.

3d. Plea.

3. Two smaller, though far distant *Parishes* may be better cared for by one *Minister*, than many a single *Great One*, in some *Towns* and *Cities*; especially *London*.

Answer.

'Tis somewhat odd (methinks) to offer this Comparison; If it be meant, that there are some so exceeding numerous *Congregations*, that they are too great a Charge for the best qualified *Minister* to undertake: I say, that, *first*, 'Tis pity but the *State* should take meet care about it; either by making more *Churches*, or providing more *Ministers* for them; *next*, that no man is compell'd to take up a burden (of this kind)

as is like to break his back. *Lastly*, That if he be engaged already; he must either lay it down, or take in help unto him: to be sure, at ~~least~~, he is obliged to lay out the utmost of himself therein; and then he may have hopes of a more than ordinary blessing with him. But for *Two Places*, and *far distant*, it is not possible that a single Person can discharge the Duty of them both; and therefore 'tis a mockery, to talk of doing it *better*, when it cann't be done at all.

4. *All Church-Livings are the Churches Common Bank: and therefore She may dispose thereof at Her discretion; provided all the Churches shall be taken care of duly.* 4th. Plea.

1. But we see *Pluralities* never suffer *such due Care* to be taken of *all particular Congregations* wants. And who would make new ventures, where all before him had miscarried? *Ans. 1.*

2. And then, not only *Two*, but *Ten*, or *Twenty*, or an *Hundred Cures*, or *more*, (for what should hinder, if supplies be made?) may be assigned to *one man*. And this were a *Monopoly*, I think, the *boldest Pluralist* would never seek a *Patent* for. 2.

3. Nay, wherefore truly, should not the *Bishop* take all the *Profits* of all the *Livings* within his *Diocess* into his own hands; allowing *Pensions*, which he thought convenient, to those that should officiate in the several *Parishes*? 3.

4. *Lastly*, But we do see, that *Glebes*, and *Tythes* ought *both* of *Right*, and do by *Law*, belong unto *particular Parish-Churches*, whence they arise; and for encouragement of those *particular Ministers*, who labour and take pains among them: as was before evinced. 4.

5. *Why? But, indeed, the Bishop hath the Care of all the Churches in his Diocess, he they never so many:* 5th. Plea.

D

Why

Why may not then a Presbyter take the Care of Two ? and put one other in his room, as he doth many ?

Answ. 1.

1. Had we nothing else to say but that, *not mens Example, but Gods Word must be our Rule*; that were enough to baffle this Pretence. We heard before, where God hath made men *Watchmen, or Overseers*; they owe a *Personal Attendance* on the respective *Flocks*, and *all* among them.

2.

2. Our Bishops Charge lies purely here; to see, as far as in him lieth, that you discharge your Duty to the *Flock*, and they to you, and unto one another, and all to God: or else to deal with *Both* or *Either*, according to the Rules of Government. You undertake; and that unto the Bishop, the *other Part* of their *Instruction*: wherein, 'tis *likely*, that you quit you very well, in not seeing their Pulpit in a twelve month once!

3.

3. Lastly, *If* (as you say) *the Bishop putteth off his Care to you, why may not you do so with yours unto another ?* Besides the Errour last taken notice of; I would also ask; *Why may not also that other, whom you trust, put off his Care unto a Third: that Third unto a Fourth: he unto a Fifth: and so in Infinitum?* Till at the last, *Every Body's work*, (according to our Proverb) *be no Body's work*: and you shall make the *most Careless business* in the World, of the *most Careful Office* that belongeth to it!

6th. Plea.

6. Lastly, *But the Pluralist hath a Curate, that dischargeth all the Duty whereunto himself is bound. And to do it by another, is as well as if himself had done it.*

Answ. 1.

It may be better, For though *too many Curates* are but *Sorry Things*; 'tis to be fear'd, *most Pluralists* are a great deal worse.

But *1st.* We have heard already what a *late Invention*,

tion, this of *Curates* is. But if, when God commands a Minister to watch, and warn, to teach, and feed his Flock himself, the Pluralist thinks still well enough, and that he is obedient unto those Commands, so long as another doth it for him: I would ask him, why he should not fulfil all other Commands the same way too? Let another Repent, Believe, Love God, and Forsake Sin for him also, and not himself; And so at last, let another be saved for him too; and himself be lost for ever! The Arguing is as good in the one, as in the other Case.

2. If another may do it for him: why may not Lay-men, as well as Clerks be presented, instituted, and inducted into Church-Livings also? Nay, why should Women be excluded from an equal share in such a Privilege? These are as capable of discharging the Duty of those Places by the way of Curates, as well as Ministers are: and, probably, it might prove better for the People so, than otherwise. For we may reasonably think, that most of them would make better allowances, and so find better Substitutes than the Covetous Pluralist ordinarily doth.

3. Once more, either the Curate is a bad, or good man; and worse, or better than the Pluralist is himself? If he be Bad; where is the Conscience, to send a Wolf to tend the Sheep? Bad Curates are worse than Thieves and Robbers: they are Soul-Destroyers. And should he be rewarded, that sends a man to kill and slay the Peoples Souls! If he be but worse, than he that sends him: what reason is there, that we should pay whole wages, when but half our work is done? What! Give a Master-workmans Hire, to one that's newly come unto, and can do little at the Trade? If he be good; Why should he do all the work, and do it well, and not have half, perhaps not

a fifth, or seventh, or tenth part of the Wages due thereto? If *better* than his *Sender* too: Why should the *worst* be best rewarded? Nay, Why *one Penny*, where there is no *Pater Noster*? It seems, *this* is the *Hireling*, and the *Curate* the *True Shepherd*. And 'tis a thousand pities that *he*, so ill deserving, should have the Charge and Profit of *two Flocks*; and *this*, with so much merit, of *none*.

Thus all the *Pluralists* Pleas are insufficient to save him harmless: and that *Evil Practice*, whereof he is indicted, must be pronounced hateful both to *God* and *Men*. As what is plainly against the *Holy Scriptures*, *Antiquity*, *Canons*, *Justice*, *Charity*, *Honour*, and *Prudence* too; serving none other Ends, than of down-right *Ungodliness*.

§. 12.
Conclusion,
with Address
in greatest Se-
riousness unto
Pluralists.

For the
Churches Ser-
vice.

For a Conclusion, I shall apply my self, and briefly, to those concerned in the Guilt before detected.

Fathers and Brethren, the Practice you are found in, appeareth bad above excuse: Will you be persuaded to reflect thereon in the fear of God? You own your selves, *True Sons of the Church of England*: and can you be persuaded, such a Behaviour is to her Service, and Reputation? Do you not know, *Monopolies* in the *State*, are not more mischievous than *Pluralities* in the *Church*? It were but little, to bid you consult your Memories, or ask your Fathers, for the Odium they have brought of old: Whether, *For men to seek their own, and not the things of Christ*, be not of influence most pernicious, and destructive, let Holy Scriptures judge. How much this evil contributed to her *late Calamity*, can't be forgotten: and how near unto a Death-bed it hath been helping to bring Her *now*, he can't but see, that will not wilfully shut his Eyes. Is it nothing to you, although *Dissenters* do reproach Her, and *Papists* ruine Her, provided,

vided, you be at dividing of the Spoil, and come in for a Childs part? Is this to be *Legitimate*, and no *Bastards*! If the *True Mother* would not have Her *Son* divided, and so destroyed: they are surely *false Sons*, that make no matter though the *Mother* be served so!

Again; Have you not taken on you a *Calling* that is most *Honourable*, and yet most *Careful*, of any other in the World? You are *Gods Ministers*; *Christs Ambassadors*! Can you *sufficiently* be concern'd for your Masters Honour, and your own Duty? And, do not your *Proceedings* plainly argue neglect, if not with Scorn, to both? They make you *Labourers*, and you are *Loiterers*! You undertake to *work*, but yet are *idle*! At very best, discharge but half of that you charge your selves withal! You are to mind your *Masters Service*: whilst you are only *serving of your selves*! Let others tend, and feed the Flock; so you make sure of the Fleece! Is there any thing else your Practice, speaks your care for? You dare not to deny that your Commission runs, To *Preach the Word*; be *instant in*, and *out of season*; *Reprove, Rebuke, Exhort, with all Long Suffering and Doctrine. To feed all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers*: and so to feed them with you; as not for *filthy lucre*, but of a *ready mind*. You do it not: and are incapable, in far distant Congregations, were you of never so ready a mind.

Lastly, The Souls committed to you, and undertaken by you, should make you tremble, both for *them*, and for *your selves*, when you consider, how carelessly you treat them both. To talk of taking care by *others*, when God expects it by *your selves*, is vain, and idle; is vile, and unexcusable! Will it pass with *you*, to bid your Servant do such, or such a busi-

Gods Honour.

*And Souls
Salvation,
their Peoples
and their own.*

Against Pluralities.

a business carefully, that is of great concernment to you; and he shall take his ease, and pleasure; and without your privity set another to perform it any how? Will a *Prince* endure that his Ambassador, Commission'd, and Equipped for an Affair of his Crown and Kingdom, should make (and for the Tythe too (may be) of his Salary) a *Substitute* without his Licence? And, dare you serve the *King of Kings* thus? And, in a matter of his Kingdom? And, for the base respect of putting Money in your Pockets? For 'tis just thus. You pretend his Commission: undertake the Charge: to be sure take the Profits: and, without Gods leave, imploy your *Hireling* in the Service. How the Affair succeeds, you trouble not your thoughts! whether Gods Kingdom get or lose: his Subjects be encreased or diminished, and peoples Souls be sav'd or damn'd eternally, you neither do, nor can, at distance, concern your selves according to your Duty. So little do you prize the purchase of Christs Blood; the Souls of Sinners, and your own! but, be you sure, the end must pay for all: and 'twill not go thus cheap at last, what're you think on't now. The Lord hath spoken it, *When I say unto the Wicked, thou shalt surely dye, and thou givest him not warning: he shall dye in his Iniquity: but his Blood will I Require at thy Hands.*

Reverend Sirs, would you but seriously ponder these things, how could you be able not to renounce the Wages of Unrighteousness, and honestly labour in the *Single Lot of Christs Vineyard*, for the Fruits you eat thereof; leaving the increase of *other Fields* unto the particular Dressers of them? Surely, you would then conclude, *one Flock* would find you work enough, if you attend the same with Conscience. If not; *one is too many*: Why have you any at all?

How

How will you answer for your negligence at Christs Tribunal? But to grasp more Business, and what, it is impossible, were you never so willing, never so able, to go through with; is as void of *Reason*, as *Religion*! For indeed, you tell the World, That it is not *Work*, but *Wages* you look after.

However remember, if *Souls* miscarry through your neglect, your own must answer for them. Let then the *Hire*, and *Labour*, go hand in hand, as they ought to do, to those that can, and will attend the same with faithfulness. *What God (and Man) have joyned together*, far be it from you to put, or longer keep *asunder*. Forget not, that you are *Stewards*, by your Office. And 'tis required in *Stewards*, faith the Apostle, *that they be found faithful*.

Who then is that faithful, and wise Servant, whom his Lord hath made Ruler over his Household, to give them their portion of Meat in due Season? Blessed is that Man, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing, Luk. 12. 42, 43.

F I N I S.

ERRATA'S.

TO the Reader, last line save two, read, *so that purpose.* pag. 1. line 24. read, on. *ibid.* l. 28. r. Bur yet. p. 3. Marg. to l. 32. r. *idem.* p. 6. l. 17. r. v. 20. p. 10. l. 28. r. discovered. p. 11. Marg. r. Contr. Faust. l. 20. c. 21. p. 13. l. 13. r. refer'd to. p. 19. l. 16. r. True Goodness. p. 20. l. 14. r. for severest Penalties. p. 23. l. 3. r. thinks 'tis well, with many other Mistoppings.

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